

Minutes from the Individual Sewage Disposal System (ISDS) Task Force – Regulatory Working Group Meeting October 18, 2000

In attendance:

Russ Chateauf, Eugenia Marks, Scott Moorehead, Tom D'Angelo, Tom Getz, Joe Frisella, Kendra Beaver, Susan Licardi, Tim Stasiunas, Deb Knauss

Copies of the agenda for the meeting and bulleted notes on the topics to be discussed were distributed.

The meeting was led by Russ Chateauf, who initiated the meeting at 8:20 by stating that copies of the minutes from the last meeting were E-mailed, with agendas for this meeting and that the Task Force meeting scheduled for tomorrow had been cancelled; the next Task Force meeting will be November 16.

The minutes from the last meeting were accepted as submitted.

Design Flows

The Department is considering reducing design flows in the current rule, because sewage flows are typically lower now than they were when the sewage flow numbers currently in the rule were generated.

The Workgroup agreed with DEM's proposal to require a tank with an additional 250-gallon capacity for homes which will have whirlpools. It was suggested that DEM could recommend that effluent filters be installed when whirlpools are installed after installation of the ISDS.

Minimum percolation rates

DEM is currently recommending that the smallest ISDS leaching field under future standards be analogous in size to a system designed on a ten minute per inch perc rate. Likewise, the Department is recommending that system design based on field data obtained prior to the requirement for soil evaluation, be no smaller than a system sized on a ten minute per inch perc rate.

It was requested that the Department provide a table comparing current leachfield sizing and costs with proposed sizing and associated costs.

Effluent Filters

The topic of effluent filters was raised. DEM indicated that, although some other states have made the use of effluent filters mandatory (e.g. CT), it was not proposing to require filters on all new systems. Although there was some concern expressed about the added costs, the protection afforded by filters and the recognition that their use would signal need for maintenance, which is a continuing problem, should outweigh these concerns. The workgroup, agreed that filters be mandated for all new systems, when a new tank is installed and on repairs when possible.

One member suggested that leaching fields might be reduced in size if effluent filters are used. The issue should be evaluated as part of the design flow/sizing issue, particularly if they become mandatory.

Bedroom definition

It was noted that the first bedroom is assigned a higher sewage flow than subsequent bedrooms, and it was suggested that perhaps the break beyond which flow is decreased should be after two bedrooms, rather than after the first. DEM wishes to modify the current definition of bedroom, because new homes and renovations to homes include rooms which fit the current definition of bedroom, but are not going to be used as bedrooms. DEM has considered developing a table which would assign number of bedrooms based on the total number of rooms in the home. This formula would designate a home with seven rooms as a three-bedroom home, although four rooms may meet the

current definition of bedroom. DEM has heard that this is responsive to the concerns of the building community and of homeowners. There is concern however about how to provide for approval of a 3 bedroom ISDS for a home and prevent it from being marketed in the future as a 4 or 5-bedroom home.

It was recommended that the language be tightened up and reviewed with the members of realty groups.

A deed restriction would be allowed, per draft language in the packet, for one bedroom less than that which is prescribed by the table, although never less than a minimum of two bedrooms. A request to decrease the number of bedrooms by more than one, to a minimum of two per residence, could be made through the variance process, but the variance may not be approved. It was cited that South Kingstown is developing a new ordinance which will allow more units per subdivision if the units are limited to one to two bedrooms per unit. This could raise an issue for the town because new regulations would require a minimum two-bedroom system serve any individual home.

Concern was expressed about future economic conditions causing adult children and their families to move into their parents' homes. This was thought more likely an issue with smaller homes and that perhaps we should focus on smaller homes. An alternative suggested was that 1- 4 rooms would be required to install a system of the minimum size of three bedrooms.

Issues requiring further analysis/discussion

Recent research has revealed that some seasonally used systems perform poorly in the first several weeks of use. The problem may be worse for certain I/A systems. Is it possible to inoculate summer-use systems at the beginning of the season to hasten formation of biomat?

It was inquired as to whether the real estate community was invited to participate. Tom stated that they were.

Future Meetings

It was decided that future meetings will be held every other Wednesday from 8:00 AM to 10:00 AM. The next four meetings will be held:

- **November 1, 2000** 8 AM to 10 AM
Conference Room A, in the Director's Office on the 4th Floor, 235 Promenade Street
- **November 15, 2000** 8 AM to 10 AM
Conference Room A, in the Director's Office on the 4th Floor, 235 Promenade Street
- **November 29, 2000** 8 AM to 10 AM
Conference Room A, in the Director's Office on the 4th Floor, 235 Promenade Street
- **December 13, 2000** 8 AM to 10 AM
Conference Room 280 C1 & 2, in the Office of Water Resources on the 2nd Floor,
235 Promenade Street